

Message Text

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20

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGR-20 AID-20 CIAE-00 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 SPC-03

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-20 STR-08

CEA-02 L-03 H-03 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 IO-14

DRC-01 SSO-00 CCO-00 /188 W
----- 075109

R 250617Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8150

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USDOC WASHDC

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DEPT PASS USDA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR: KU

SUBJ: US RICE SALES TO KUWAIT

1. IN PAST FEW DAYS EMBASSY HAS BECOME AWARE OF STRONGLY
RENEWED INTEREST AMONG LOCAL MERCHANTS IN IMPORTING
SIZEABLE QUANTITIES US RICE. LARGEST RICE DEALER
RECENTLY BOUGHT 10,000 TONS FROM CONTINENTAL GRAIN,
ALTHOUGH HE IMMEDIATELY SOLD BACK 3,000 TONS APPARENTLY
AT HANDSOME PROFIT. TWO OTHER LOCAL FIRMS HAVE RECENTLY
QUERIED EMBASSY RE RICE IMPORTS. ONE WANTS IMPORT
10,000 TONS AND OTHER CLAIMS NEEDS 100,000 TONS.

2. KUWAIT'S NORMAL ANNUAL RICE CONSUMPTION IS ABOUT
18,000 TONS. PRESUMABLY 30,000-40,000 TONS WOULD
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SATISFY ENTIRE GULF MARKET. WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE,

SOME MERCHANTS BUYING FOR REEXPORT TO WIDE MARKET. THEY, NO DOUBT, HOPE TAKE ADVANTAGE TIGHT SUPPLY SITUATION AND HIGH PRICES AND MAY FEAR US WILL SOON EMBARGO RICE AND OTHER COMMODITIES TO ARAB WORLD IN RETALIATION OIL EMBARGO. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE PAKISTAN, THAILAND AND OTHER TRADITIONAL ASIAN SUPPLIERS UNABLE MEET NORMAL REQUIREMENTS THIS YEAR. APPEARS THEREFORE US RICE EXPORTS TO KUWAIT SHOULD SHOW SIGNIFICANT INCREASE.

3. MOVES BY LOCAL MERCHANTS IMPORT AMERICAN RICE COME AT TIME NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SHARPLY ATTACKING GOK OVER RAPIDLY RISING PRICES, PARTICULARLY OF BASIC FOOD ITEMS INCLUDING RICE. SOME DEPUTIES HAVE CALLED FOR RESIGNATION MINISTER COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. STOLTZFUS

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